

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee Public Hearing
Public Testimony of Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
*S.B. 1108 An Act Concerning Access To Reproductive Healthcare By Students At Public
Institutions Of Higher Education*
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The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide nonprofit that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. For nearly fifty years, CWEALF has been a leader in the development of policy solutions that enhance women's economic security, combat discrimination and increase gender equity.

CWEALF urges the committee to support *S.B. 1108 An Act Concerning Access To Reproductive Healthcare By Students At Public Institutions Of Higher Education* to increase access to reproductive health care services for students in our state's residential higher education campuses.

Senate Bill Number 1108 supports the educational success of students by addressing challenges and barriers to reproductive healthcare and bodily autonomy they may be facing. This will create a substantial impact, both in the short and long term, for students enrolled in Connecticut residential universities, and will support the overall health of future generations.

Out of the total student population in Connecticut's higher education system, 60% identify as women. This bill allows students to make safe informed decisions about their reproductive lives and will help them fully pursue their education and career goals. Most college students already face the burden of economic instability and deal with busy schedules that limit their ability to seek care, since the majority of campus healthcare centers are open during weekdays and have reduced hours on weekends or holidays.¹

Students should be able to rely on their institution for the necessary resources and care they need to maintain a healthy life while in school. With limited staff and inadequate training on campus health centers, this creates a barrier for students to receive the proper care they need and are expected to receive. Without an established plan or process put in place, students may be referred to off campus pregnancy centers' that spread fear and misinformation about reproductive care.

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<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SpiVyVIRE2DK7R1HzmNLbWoOU6hBuZGE5m2PUNw2f28/edit#heading=h.nj23sjpj5u97>

We urge you to consider S.B. 1108, as it will increase access to reproductive healthcare for students enrolled and housed in public institutions, and will continue to support their educational success, bodily autonomy, and overall well-being.